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STOP 0256, Room 3932-South  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0256



To Whom It May Concern,

As a dairy farmer I have great concerns regarding the proposed dairy checkoff exemption in the Federal Register Vol 69, No 80 Monday, April 26, 2004 Sec. 1150.157 for 100% organic dairy farmers. To exempt one group of dairy farmers from paying their share of the dairy checkoff assessment is divisive to the marketing of dairy products and erodes the concept of the Unified Marketing Plan and unified marketing activities in general. This concept pits one type of farm management practice against another, and will only cause consumers to be bombarded with more erroneous information about dairy farming and agriculture in general. Organically produced dairy products have no different nutrient contribution to our diets.

USDA has released statistically information showing since the inception of the dairy checkoff program there has been an increase in the consumption of dairy products. The USDA dairy checkoff assessment was initiated so all dairy farmers paid a fee to have the promotion and nutrition education programs focusing on dairy products, support by all cow dairy farmers! Not have the cost for these efforts borne by a few dairy farmers, while the other dairy farmers get a free ride on their neighbors' dairy checkoff assessment. The dairy industry has enough outside forces to deal with, without having their marketing efforts economically sabotaged from within the dairy industry by the dairy farmers that have been reaping the benefits of the dairy checkoff assessment!

More so than ever the dairy industry in the United States need to be cohesive in their marketing efforts and all bovine dairy farmers contribute their dairy checkoff assessment to have a unified marketing effort. With foreign imports, milk fraction, pricing, devise groups such as PETA, Physicians for Responsible Medicine, CSPI attacking the dairy industry, why should some dairy farmers pay, and other dairy farmers' free ride. When the premise of dairy checkoff is to build demand for dairy products, how can in all fairness, one type of dairy farm management is allowed to be exempt? Won't they also reap the benefits of increased demand for dairy products? Won't their dairy image be protected by the checkoff crisis/ issue management programs? Won't their milk be included in the Food Guide Pyramid and the nutritive value of it be taught in the classroom? Won't their milk be included when health professionals mention the importance of dairy calcium as interventions in osteoporosis, hypertension, and weight control? Won't their milk and dairy product be included the 3-A-Day of Dairy on retail ad and packaging? Won't consumers think of their milk when they see a dairy product or milk ad on TV or hear a milk or dairy product commercials on the radio? Why should they get all the positive things and activities checkoff has accomplished for the dairy farmers and be exempt from paying the checkoff assessment? It seems to me it is the opposite of taxation without representation that started the Boston Tea Party! This is representation without taxation and could have the same devastating results as the Boston Tea party for the dairy industry and its nationwide marketing programs!

Sincerely,

*Charles L. Bowart*  
Dairy Farmer (Maine)